

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 15054 171731Z

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 15054

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BTIO, BTRA, TC

SUBJECT: ARAB BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

REF: ABU DHABI 1767

1. AS IS KNOWN, REPORT OF IMMINENT REMOVAL OF FORD MOTORS CO. FROM ARAB BOYCOTT LIST HAS COME UP ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN THE GULF AREA DURING THE LAST SIX MONTHS AND A SIMILAR REPORT FOR LEBANON WAS BROUGHT TO THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION LAST JULY.

2. WE HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH A RELIABLE AND FRIENDLY LEBANESE OFFICIAL WHO WAS PRESENT AT RECENT ARAB LEAGUE MEETINGS DEALING WITH BOYCOTT MATTERS. FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, THERE WAS NEVER ANY DISCUSSION AT THESE MEETINGS ABOUT THE REMOVAL OF FORD FROM THE LIST, HE MAINTAINED. IN HIS VIEW, RIVALRY AND JOCKEYING FOR POSITION BY CERTAIN BUSINESSMEN FOR THE FORD AGENCY IS BASED RATHER ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THERE WOULD BE SOME SORT OF MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT AND THAT THIS WOULD IN TURN BRING ABOUT A RELAXING OF THE BOYCOTT IN GENERAL. FOR THOSE WISHING TO OBTAIN IMPORTANT AGENCIES, PREPARATIONS HAD TO BE MADE PRIOR TO THE

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ACTUAL DATE OF ANY SUCH RELAXATION.

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